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News

Anti-gay attack

Men chased, beaten after MoBay carnival stage display

Tuesday, April 03, 2007

Montego Bay, St James - The police in Montego Bay say they are investigating the mob attack on three alleged homosexuals during the MoBay Nite Out carnival event early yesterday morning, which left one of them hospitalised.

"We are speaking with them to see if they can identify the people who attacked them, with a view to making arrests," said St James commanding officer Steve McGregor.

The Observer was told that the men, who were part of a group of costumed revellers in the carnival procession along the popular Gloucester Avenue "Hip Strip", drew the ire of the mass gathering when they took to the stage shortly after midnight and proceeded to gyrate on each other.

"According to the reports, they were wining and dancing on each other and this did not sit well with the crowd," McGregor told the Observer.

Subsequently, in a show of disgust, the crowd reportedly pelted them with bottles and stones, insisting that they leave the stage. However, according to a man claiming to be an eyewitness, chaos ensued when the men retaliated by returning the missiles into the crowd.

The accused men were soon set upon, chased and beaten by the angry mob. They reportedly ran to several entertainment spots along the Hip Strip for refuge.

One business owner who had to rescue one of the men

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described the incident as "crazy". "Even the police were afraid," he said, adding that his venue, a popular night spot, had to be closed to prevent the angry mob from getting to the man.

"At one point, some 30 to 40 persons were outside trying to get to him," the businessman told the Observer. "He had on no shirt, no shoes and appeared severely beaten and was bleeding from a cut to his head."

On February 14, three men who were branded as homosexuals had to be rescued by cops from an angry mob outside a pharmacy in Tropical Plaza, Half-Way-Tree, St Andrew.

People in the crowd said that the commotion started after the men, who were all dressed in tight jeans pants and skimpy shirts, were scolded by a woman who was apparently upset at what she described as their effeminate behaviour.

One of the men reportedly doused her with liquid from a bottle, triggering an angry response from the woman and other people who were said to have witnessed the confrontation.

News of the incident attracted a large crowd, which the police had to disperse by firing tear gas canisters in order to take the men away.

One man in the crowd voiced his disapproval at the police action as they drove out of the plaza with the men.

"Unu can come save them nasty boy yah? Them boy yah fi go down," the man bellowed.

One woman expressed surprise at the brazenness of the men. "Jamaica has lost its way if men think they can openly flaunt being gay without any consequences," she said. "We don't want that kind of open gay life in this country."

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